Top Secrets to Eating in Moderation

In the last lesson, you learned tips and techniques for controlling your portion sizes. Portion sizes are certainly an essential part of eating in moderation, but we also eat lots of things besides meals. How can you eat in moderation while you're surrounded by temptations such as candy, potato chips, and pastries? And this question brings us to today's lesson.

Fortunately, it's possible to lessen the temptation and find a way to eat moderately!

These tips will help you stay healthy and on track for cutting calories by learning to eat in moderation:

1. **Understand the meaning of moderation.** What does moderation mean?
    - **Although moderation can vary from person to person, experts agree that it generally involves limiting unhealthy foods to small amounts and rare occasions.** This means that you eat cookies or doughnuts in small pieces and not every day.
    - It's important to figure out your own level of comfort with moderation. Are you able to avoid eating chips during the weekdays but find it hard to eliminate them on the weekends? **You have to create your own set of rules to make moderation work for you.**
2. **Keep a journal.** It's hard to remember everything you've consumed during the week. You can easily forget that you ate half a candy bar at your desk or finished a small bag of pretzels while watching television. A journal for your food intake can help you keep track of everything you eat.
    - The journal can help you figure out when and how to cut out unhealthy food.
    - **It also helps you notice patterns, so your goal to eat in moderation is easier to reach.** For example, if you discover that you always reach for unhealthy snacks after work, then you can create a new after-work habit that supports your goal.
3. **Control your triggers.** Do you reach for the doughnuts because you're stressed or worried?

- **The most common triggers for overeating are stress and anxiety.** However, fatigue and boredom are also triggers that can encourage you to eat pizza instead of a healthy green salad.

- Discover how to control these triggers: First, identify your triggers and pay attention to the events that cause them. For example, does talking to your mother-in-law make you feel anxious and cause you to eat a bagel? Once you've identified the triggers, you can work on coping strategies to get rid of them.

- In Module 2, you'll discover strategies for dealing effectively with several specific triggers, so they don't derail all your other efforts to cut calories.

4. **Hide or get rid of the temptations.** If you don't keep pastries in the house, you won't reach for them out of boredom during a TV show.

    - Temptations vary from person to person, but the most common items are sugary and salty snacks. This includes cake, cookies, chips, pretzels, and other common food products.

    - If you can't throw away all of the junk food, the next best step is to put it in a place that is hard to reach. For example, you can store the food on a top shelf that requires you to get a chair or stool to reach. Another option is put it in a storage area that isn't used often.

Moderation is the key to eating healthy without feeling deprived and hungry all the time.

But you can consume calories all day long without taking a bite of food! How? Unless you drink only water, then you're likely getting additional calories from your drinks. The next lesson will help you manage these liquid calories.

Here's what you need to do today:

Get a food journal and write down everything you eat. Start with what you ate today and include an approximate portion size of each item. A small notebook will work fine. If you like, you could buy a dedicated, decorated journal where the dates are already on the pages.

Keep track of what and how much you consume. See how it changes as you go through your weight loss journey.